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IDEOLOGY ROOTED IN POWER

For the first time since Lenin, the Little Father of All the Russias, and the Bolsheviks seized power, the Soviet Union has become the property of its secret police.

The instrument for this shift in power has been Mikhail Gorbachev, an ambitious politician who hitched his wagon to the KGB. The Western media has hailed Mr. Gorbachev as a "technocrat" — one of a new breed of Soviet bureaucrat determined to streamline the ailing Soviet system. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Gorbachev's technocratic efforts to revitalize Soviet agriculture were a total failure, yet he has risen. What brought him to power as the new *vozhd* were his organizational ties to the KGB — whose dread boss, Yuri Andropov, would still be boss of the Kremlin had he not died. While Mr. Andropov's successor, Konstantin Chernenko, held geriatric power, the KGB maneuvered to put Mr. Gorbachev in the Kremlin's top position.

Anyone with access to the real history of the Soviet Union is aware of this, though few choose to say it.

The source of Stalin's power was his iron control of the Communist Party bureaucracy, which he kept in line through purges which eliminated the old Bolsheviks, and by police terror. The secret police, under various names, were Stalin's personal enforcers.

Beginning with Nikita Khrushchev, the power of the military was enhanced to the point where it could demand and get allocation of some 25 percent of the Soviet Union's gross domestic product to create the greatest conventional and nuclear muscle in the world's history.

Leonid Brezhnev was the last of the Soviet czars to give the military everything it wanted.

Under Mr. Gorbachev all this has changed. That grizzled veteran of Kremlin warfare was replaced as foreign minister by Eduard Shevardnadze, until then head of the KGB in the Soviet Georgian Republic. Marshal Nicolai Ogarkov, under KGB discipline, was given full charge of the military. Nicolai Baibakov, for many years head of Gosplan, the powerful state planning organization, has been replaced by Nicolai Talyzin, a technocrat with strong KGB ties who was on hand in Afghanistan when the Soviets invaded. Mr. Talyzin has also been given one of the four first deputy premierships.

The rise and development of the KGB has not been abrupt — and today it is incremental. It began when Lenin ordered Felix Dzerzhinsky to create a secret police, the *Gusadartsvennoye Politescheskoye Upravlenye* — the GPU — to suppress all internal political dissent. With the passage of time, the GPU changed its call letters to OGPU, NKVD, MVD, MGB, and KGB — and so absorbed the GRU, the Soviet military's intelligence arm, that operatives in the field have sometimes not known whether they worked for the KGB or the GRU.

In 1927, Mr. Dzerzhinsky could report that the GPU had 1,300 "employees." By the mid 1950s, the NKVD had some 9,000 "master spies" and about 200,000 subordinates, with half a million informants and other collaborators abroad. By conservative estimate, the KGB's size has increased tenfold. And from the rooting out of political dissent, it has taken on such functions as intelligence, counterintelligence, disinformation, subversion, propaganda, and organization and control of front groups such as the "nuclear freeze" and anti-nuclear-arms movements.

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In recent years, no Soviet bureaucrat or Kremlin politician could survive KGB opposition. Under Mr. Gorbachev, it has been steadily replacing the heads of the Soviet bureaucracy with its own people. It has also become strictly professional — its only ideology being the preservation and increase of its power.

In the past, the KGB's chief agents held a semblance of Marxist-Leninist faith. Even such professional killers as Enea Sormenti (aka Vittorio Vidali, aka Carlos Contreras), commissar of the *Quinta Brigada* which conducted the bloody purges of the International Brigades during the Spanish civil war, clung to some vestiges of Leninism. But this is a thing of the past.

But the KGB's professionalism is also its weakness. A top agent can be bought, if the price is right or if changes in the Kremlin power structure threaten his life, as was the case of Vitaly Yurchenko, the KGB's No. 5 man who recently defected. That is the KGB's vulnerability — and it will increase if it becomes apparent that the thousand-year U.S.S.R. is but a splash in history.

Ralph de Toledano is a nationally syndicated columnist.